

February 5, 2019

Testimony of **Richard DuPont**

RE: Support of:

Proposed Bill No. 5833

An Act Expanding Advanced Manufacturing Certificate Programs at Regional Community-Technical Colleges.

Raised Bill No. 7027

An Act Concerning Manufacturing and Technology.

Raised Bill No. 799

An Act Concerning Workforce Development.

To the Chair and Committee of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

Good Afternoon. My name is Richard DuPont and I presently serve as Director of Community and Campus Relations for the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center (AMTC) at Housatonic Community College (HCC). I am also President of Resource Development Associates (RDA) of Watertown a Manufacturing based Consulting company I have owned for the last fifteen years. It was in that capacity that I was asked about five years ago to assist in rebuilding the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Program at HCC that led me to serve as Interim and Program Director of the AMTC. That said, I will spare you the details of my background in manufacturing, training and education and have attached my Bio for review.

Manufacturing was the foundation on which the state of Connecticut was built. Most of us don't have to look to far around to find some connection to a family member who had a job, was employed in or enjoyed a career in manufacturing that provided for a middle, upper middle or perhaps upper-class lifestyle. In most cases that was accomplished with little, if any debt for formal education. At the same time, manufacturing was often identified as "dark", "dirty" or "dangerous" and by today's standards, probably for good reason.

Fast forward to today's manufacturing. Yes, we still fight that same "perception" issue of what manufacturing used to be. Today however we come to learn more about what manufacturing really represents. It is clean, safe and high tech and most importantly, provides not just jobs but Careers. These career opportunities are literally limitless in Manufacturing because as an industry, a manufacturing operation employs a diverse number of positions and needs.

Manufacturing is an economic driver. Today, given low rates of unemployment, a demand for skills to fill some 12,000 jobs presently open across CT (let alone what we will need over the next decade) we must realize that to meet those demands our best hope is to focus on our inner cities and distressed municipalities where the majority of the children in our state are born and raised.

If time permitted today, I would be here for hours sharing success story after success story that the Advanced Manufacturing and Technology programs are producing in CT. These programs are literally changing lives by providing excellent career opportunities for men, women, in school, out of school or otherwise and without boundaries for race, religion, beliefs or backgrounds. Most impressive is that although the AMTC program does offer degree pathways, those are the choice of each individual and are not “required” to earn a very good livable wage.

College Connections is key to our future. The AMTC programs are facilitated within our Community Colleges but offer us opportunity to expand these programs into our comprehensive high schools critical to the future of manufacturing in CT and to the future of CT itself.

Please, take the time you need to review what I have attached. I am committed to helping, I will make myself available to answer any questions at any time, host tours, introduce you to graduates, employers and more.

In closing then I ask for your support of Proposed Bill 5833, Raised Bill 799 and Raised Bill 7027.

These Bills are all connected to the continued success of the AMTC programs and our communities.